UNITED NATIONS

UNEP

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

BC
RC
SC

UNEP/CHW.12/13
UNEP/FAO/RC/COP.7/13
UNEP/POPS/COP.7/13

Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and Their Disposal

Rotterdam Convention on the Prior Informed Consent Procedure for Certain Hazardous Chemicals and Pesticides in International Trade

Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants

Distr.: General
21 January 2015

Original: English

Conference of the Parties to the Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and Their Disposal
Twelfth meeting
Geneva, 4–15 May 2015
Item 4 (d) (i) of the provisional agenda*
Matters related to the implementation of the Convention: technical assistance: capacity-building

Conference of the Parties to the Rotterdam Convention on the Prior Informed Consent Procedure for Certain Hazardous Chemicals and Pesticides in International Trade
Seventh meeting
Geneva, 4–15 May 2015
Item 5 (d) of the provisional agenda**
Matters related to the implementation of the Convention: technical assistance

Conference of the Parties to the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants
Seventh meeting
Geneva, 4–15 May 2015
Item 5 (f) of the provisional agenda***
Matters related to the implementation of the Convention: technical assistance

Technical assistance and capacity-building for the implementation of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions

Note by the Secretariat

I. Introduction

1. The present note sets out information on technical assistance and capacity-building for the Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and Their Disposal, the Rotterdam Convention on the Prior Informed Consent Procedure for Certain Hazardous Chemicals and Pesticides in International Trade and the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants. The information is being set out jointly for the first time so as to allow for the overall presentation of the framework guiding the activities to strengthen technical assistance and capacity-building and to highlight opportunities for joint implementation in those areas. The note also outlines convention-specific information pertaining to technical assistance and capacity-building

* UNEP/CHW.12/1.
** UNEP/FAO/RC/COP.7/1.
*** UNEP/POPS/COP.7/1.

activities, as these are important for upholding the individual objectives of the conventions. The note is structured as follows: section I explains the rationale for presenting the information jointly; section II reiterates the mandates for technical assistance and capacity-building under each of the conventions, as well as recent decisions adopted by the conferences of the parties; section III provides an overview of the implementation of the respective mandates, including a summary of parties' responses to the questionnaires on technical assistance and capacity-building needs, activities undertaken during the biennium 2014–2015 and an outline of the programme of technical assistance and capacity-building for the biennium 2016–2017; and section IV outlines the proposed action that the conferences of the parties may wish to consider on the matter.

II. Mandates for the work on technical assistance and capacity-building as contained in the articles of the conventions and recent decisions of the conferences of the parties

A. Basel Convention

2. Article 16, paragraph (1) (g), of the Basel Convention provides that the functions of the Secretariat include receiving and conveying information from and to parties on sources of technical assistance and training, available technical and scientific know-how, sources of advice and expertise and availability of resources, with a view to assisting them, upon request, in such areas as the handling of the notification system of the Convention; the management of hazardous wastes and other wastes; environmentally sound technologies relating to hazardous wastes and other wastes, such as low- and non-waste technology; the assessment of disposal capabilities and sites; the monitoring of hazardous wastes and other wastes; and emergency responses.

3. In paragraphs 2 and 3 of decision BC-11/11, the Conference of the Parties invited:

(a) Developing-country parties and parties with economies in transition to provide information to the Secretariat on their needs in terms of technical assistance and technology transfer, difficulties in implementing the Basel Convention and any other views in that regard;

(b) Developed-country parties and others with a capacity to do so to continue to provide information to the Secretariat on the technical assistance and technology that they have available to be transferred to developing-country parties and parties with economies in transition.

4. In paragraph 4 of the decision, the Conference of the Parties requested the Secretariat to develop, within available resources, user-friendly, concise and targeted online questionnaires for the collection of the information referred to in paragraph 3 above.

5. In paragraph 5 of the decision, the Conference of the Parties took note of the technical assistance programme set out in document UNEP/CHW.11/INF/21 and requested the Secretariat to enhance its work to facilitate the delivery of technical assistance and the transfer of environmentally sound technologies, taking into account the elements contained in the technical assistance programme.

6. In the same decision, the Conference of the Parties requested the Secretariat to prepare and submit a report to the Conference of the Parties at its twelfth meeting on progress made in providing technical assistance and capacity-building and facilitating the transfer of environmentally sound technologies to parties, taking into account the information collected pursuant to paragraphs 2 and 3 of the decision, and to prepare a technical assistance programme for the biennium 2016–2017 based on the information collected and taking into account the synergies process.

B. Rotterdam Convention

7. Article 19, paragraph 2 (b), of the Rotterdam Convention provides that the Secretariat shall facilitate assistance to parties, particularly developing countries and countries with economies in transition, on request, in the implementation of the Convention.

8. In paragraphs 2 and 3 of decision RC-6/11, the Conference of the Parties invited:

(a) Developing-country parties and parties with economies in transition to continue to inform the Secretariat of their needs in terms of technical assistance and capacity-building, difficulties in implementing the Rotterdam Convention and any other observation in that regard;

(b) Developed-country parties and others with a capacity to do so to continue to provide information to the Secretariat on available technical assistance and capacity-building that they could provide to developing-country parties and parties with economies in transition.

9. In paragraph 4 of the decision, the Conference of the Parties invited the Secretariat to develop, within available resources, online questionnaires for the collection of the information mentioned above.

10. In paragraph 5 of the decision, the Conference of the Parties took note of the technical assistance programme set out in document UNEP/FAO/RC/COP.6/INF/19 and requested the Secretariat to take into account the elements contained therein when carrying out its work.

11. Also in decision RC-6/11, the Conference of the Parties requested the Secretariat to submit a report to the Conference of the Parties at its seventh meeting on progress in the implementation of the technical assistance and capacity-building programme mentioned above, taking into account the information to be provided by parties pursuant to paragraphs 2 and 3 of the decision , and to prepare a technical assistance programme for the biennium 2016–2017 based on the information collected and taking into account the synergies process.

C. Stockholm Convention

12. Article 20, paragraph 2 (b), of the Stockholm Convention provides that the Secretariat shall facilitate assistance to the parties, particularly developing-country parties and parties with economies in transition, on request, in the implementation of the Convention.

13. Article 12, paragraph 3, of the Convention provides that technical assistance to be provided by developed-country parties, and other parties in accordance with their capabilities, shall include, as appropriate and as mutually agreed, technical assistance for capacity-building relating to implementation of the obligations under the Convention; further guidance in this regard shall be provided by the Conference of the Parties.

14. In its decision SC-1/15, the Conference of the Parties adopted the guidance on technical assistance and transfer of environmentally sound technologies set forth in the annex to that decision and requested the Secretariat to report at each meeting of the Conference of the Parties on progress in the application of the guidance.

15. In decision SC-6/15, the Conference of the Parties encouraged parties and relevant international and non-governmental organizations to provide to the Secretariat information on their experiences in implementing the guidance on technical assistance and transfer of environmentally sound technologies set out in the annex to decision SC-1/15.

16. In paragraphs 2 and 3 of the same decision, the Conference of the Parties:

(a) Invited developing-country parties and parties with economies in transition to provide information to the Secretariat on their technical assistance and technology transfer needs and the barriers and obstacles in that regard;

(b) Invited developed-country parties and others with the capacity to do so to continue to provide information to the Secretariat on the technical assistance and technologies that they have available to be transferred to developing-country parties and parties with economies in transition.

17. In paragraph 5 of the decision, the Conference of the Parties requested the Secretariat to continue to develop, within available resources, online questionnaires for the collection of the information mentioned in paragraphs 2 to 4 of the decision.

18. In paragraph 6, the Conference of the Parties also requested the Secretariat to enhance its work to facilitate the delivery of technical assistance and the transfer of environmentally sound technologies in accordance with decision SC-1/15, taking into account the elements contained in the technical assistance programme (see UNEP/POPS/COP.6/INF/18).

19. In paragraph 8, the Conference of the Parties further requested the Secretariat to submit a report for consideration by the Conference of the Parties at its seventh meeting concerning:

(a) Progress in the application of the guidance on technical assistance and transfer of environmentally sound technology set out in the annex to decision SC-1/15, taking into account, in particular, the needs identified by parties in:

(i) National implementation plans pursuant to Article 7 of the Convention;

(ii) National reports submitted pursuant to Article 15 of the Convention;

(iii) The information collected pursuant to paragraphs 2, 3 and 4 of decision SC-6/15;

(b) Progress in the implementation of its technical assistance programme;

(c) Means to address the obstacles and barriers to technology transfer pursuant to paragraphs 2 and 3 of decision SC-6/15.

20. In the same decision, the Conference of the Parties requested the Secretariat to prepare a technical assistance programme for the biennium 2016–2017 based on the information collected as mentioned above and taking into account the synergies process.

D. Institutional strengthening at the national level to enhance implementation of the three conventions

21. The United Nations Environment Assembly, in its resolution 1/5 on chemicals and waste, adopted the terms of reference for a special programme to support institutional strengthening at the national level to enhance the implementation of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions, the Minamata Convention on Mercury and the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management.

22. In the same resolution, the Assembly invited parties to the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions as well as parties to the Minamata Convention and the Strategic Approach to promote an effective and efficient network of regional centres to strengthen the regional delivery of technical assistance.

III. Implementation

A. Guidance on technical assistance under the Stockholm Convention

23. On 6 September 2013, the Secretariat sent a letter requesting information in follow-up to the decisions taken by the Conference of the Parties, inviting parties and others to provide, by 31 May 2014, information on their experiences in implementing the guidance on technical assistance and transfer of environmentally sound technologies as set out in the annex to decision SC-1/15.

24. As at 30 October 2014, no information had been received from any party or relevant international or non-governmental organization regarding the information sought.

25. Since the third meeting of the Conference of the Parties, little information has been provided to the Secretariat by parties or relevant international or non-governmental organizations on their experiences in implementing the guidance on technical assistance set out in the annex to decision SC-1/15.

26. For future meetings of the Conference of the Parties, it is suggested that information on experiences in implementing the guidance on technical assistance set out in the annex to decision SC-1/15 be collected by means of existing online questionnaires or other relevant sources of information regarding the needs of developing-country parties or parties with economies in transition in terms of technical assistance and technology transfer and regarding the technical assistance and technologies that are available to be transferred to developing-country parties or parties with economies in transition.

B. Technical assistance needs and challenges under the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions

27. On 6 September[1] and 3 October[2] 2013, the Secretariat sent letters requesting information in follow-up to the decisions taken by the conferences of the parties to the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions, inviting parties and others to provide, by 31 May 2014, the information sought in paragraphs 2 and 3 of decisions BC-11/11, RC-6/11 and SC-6/15, as referred to above.

28. In order to facilitate the submission of the information, the Secretariat updated existing online questionnaires for the Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions and developed a questionnaire for the Basel Convention, which were made available on the conventions' websites as follows:

(a) A first set of questionnaires aimed at collecting information from developing-country parties and parties with economies in transition regarding their needs in terms of technical assistance and capacity-building and the difficulties in implementing each of the conventions and any other observations in that regard;

[1] For the Basel and Stockholm conventions.

[2] For the Rotterdam Convention.

(b) A second set of questionnaires aimed at collecting information from developed-country parties on the technical assistance and capacity-building that they could provide to developing-country parties and parties with economies in transition.[3]

29. In addition, the Secretariat developed a database to centralize the collection of information related to the needs of parties in connection with implementation of the conventions. The database will allow for analysis of data on a regional and a thematic basis. The needs would be clustered into different areas such as technical issues, legal frameworks, coordination and cooperation and information exchange. The database will also allow for a comparison of identified needs with those technical assistance activities that have already been provided to each party, for the monitoring of progress and for an analysis of the impact of the technical assistance programme.

30. As at 30 October 2014, 42 parties to the Basel Convention[4] had submitted the information sought pursuant to paragraph 2 of decision BC-11/11 and 12 parties[5] had provided the information sought pursuant to paragraph 3 of decision BC-11/11, using the electronic questionnaires.

31. As at 30 October 2014, 25 parties to the Rotterdam Convention[6] had submitted the information sought pursuant to paragraph 2 of decision RC-6/11 and 12 parties[7] had provided the information sought pursuant to paragraph 3 of decision RC-6/11, using the electronic questionnaires.

32. As at 30 October 2014, 36 parties to the Stockholm Convention[8] had submitted the information sought pursuant to paragraph 2 of decision SC-6/15 and 11 parties[9] had provided the information sought pursuant to paragraph 3 of decision SC-6/15, using the electronic questionnaires.

33. On the basis of the information provided by parties, an overview of the main needs and challenges in implementing the conventions has been identified covering the following areas:

(a) For the Basel Convention:

(i) Developing a national strategy to combat illegal traffic;

(ii) Developing a cost-benefit analysis on the Basel Protocol on Liability and Compensation for Damage Resulting from Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and Their Disposal;

(iii) Awareness-raising on the ratification of the Ban Amendment to the Basel Convention;

(iv) Awareness-raising on the control procedure for the transboundary movement of hazardous wastes;

(v) Environmentally sound management of priority waste streams, in particular on e-wastes, used lead-acid batteries, persistent organic pollutant wastes and mercury wastes;

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[3] For the Stockholm Convention the questionnaires also aimed at collecting information on the barriers and obstacles that developed countries face in responding to the needs identified by developing-country parties and parties with economies in transition.

[4] Albania, Argentina, Azerbaijan, Belize, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cabo Verde, China, Colombia, Comoros, Congo, Costa Rica, Cote d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Egypt, El Salvador, Ethiopia, Georgia, Guatemala, Guinea, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Kyrgyzstan, Lebanon, Madagascar, Malawi, Malaysia, Mauritius, Montenegro, Morocco, Nepal, Niger, Panama, Paraguay, Serbia, South Africa, Swaziland, Tunisia, Ukraine, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of) and Yemen.

[5] Austria, Bulgaria, Canada, Cyprus, Estonia, Japan, Liechtenstein, Norway, Poland, Slovakia, Sweden and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

[6] Albania, Argentina, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Bosnia and Herzegovina, China, Colombia, Cook Islands, Costa Rica, Cuba, Ecuador, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Jamaica, Kyrgyzstan, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malaysia, Mauritius, Morocco, Nepal, Niger, Panama, Philippines, Republic of Moldova, Serbia and Yemen.

[7] Canada, Estonia, European Union, Finland, France, Hungary, Italy, Japan, Latvia, Luxembourg, Norway and Spain.

[8] Albania, Argentina, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Bosnia and Herzegovina, China, Colombia, Cote d'Ivoire, Egypt, El Salvador, Gabon, Guatemala, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Honduras, Malawi, Mali, Mauritius, Mongolia, Montenegro, Morocco, Nepal, Niger, Nigeria, Panama, Republic of Moldova, Sao Tome and Principe, Serbia, Sudan, Swaziland, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Tunisia, Uganda, Ukraine and Yemen.

[9] Austria, Bulgaria, Canada, Cyprus, Finland, Japan, Liechtenstein, Monaco, Norway, Slovakia and Sweden.

(b) For the Rotterdam Convention:

(i) Monitoring human health or environmental incidents at the national level, in order to prepare proposals for listing severely hazardous pesticide formulations;

(ii) Application of alternative substances or methods to newly listed chemicals;

(iii) Development of risk evaluations and risk management strategies in order to prepare final regulatory action;

(iv) Collecting information on chemicals and exchanging scientific information;

(c) For the Stockholm Convention:

(i) Implementing best available techniques and best environmental practices;

(ii) Collecting data to update national implementation plans;

(iii) Identifying products and articles in stockpiles and wastes;

(iv) Collecting data for undertaking inventories of persistent organic pollutants.

34. Elements that have been suggested as priority areas for future technical assistance activities under two or three of the conventions include face-to-face meetings for customs officers, coordination at the national level, the facilitation of project proposals for resource mobilization, a review process for chemicals in the Chemical Review Committee and the Persistent Organic Pollutants Review Committee and training on national reporting, in particular related to the collection of inventory data.

35. The questionnaires have shown that parties are aware of the technical assistance activities (over 90 per cent) mainly through the conventions' websites, invitations to participate in the activities organized by the Secretariat and the technical assistance newsletters.

36. In addition, a number of parties indicated difficulties in contacting the Secretariat to access technical assistance. The Secretariat has therefore appointed regional focal points within the Secretariat to ensure that a prompt and tailored response is provided that addresses the needs of parties. Their contact information has been posted on the websites and disseminated through several channels.

37. The reports prepared by the Secretariat on the information requested pursuant to the invitations mentioned in paragraphs 2 and 3 of decisions BC-11/11 and RC-6/11 and pursuant to paragraph 8 of decision SC-6/15 are available in documents UNEP/CHW.12/INF/24, UNEP/FAO/RC/COP.7/INF/16 and UNEP/POPS/COP.7/INF/15.

C. Programme on technical assistance

38. In the light of the mandates given by decisions BC-11/11, RC-6/11 and SC-6/15 and on the basis of the analysis of the information provided by developing-country parties and parties with economies in transition to the Secretariat on their needs in terms of technical assistance and technology transfer (see para. 33 above), the Secretariat continued to implement its technical assistance programme upon request to facilitate the provision of technical assistance to developing-country parties and parties with economies in transition.

39. The programme on technical assistance tailors the provision of technical assistance and capacity-building activities by developing and using the most efficient combination of tools and methodologies to support parties to achieve the goals of the conventions.

40. The objective of the programme is to respond to the requests of parties by building sustainable human and institutional capacity through training, pilot activities, public-private partnerships, technical cooperation and technology transfer and by facilitating support at the regional level through the regional centres under the Basel and Stockholm conventions as well as through the regional and subregional offices of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP).

I. Progress in implementing the technical assistance and capacity-building programme for the biennium 2014–2015

41. In the light of the mandates mentioned above and to facilitate the provision of technical assistance to developing-country parties and parties with economies in transition, the Secretariat continued to implement its technical assistance programme upon request. Among other activities, the Secretariat:

(a) Continued to take measures to increase its efficiency and improve its delivery of technical assistance by making use of the synergies that have resulted from joining the secretariats of the Basel and Stockholm conventions and the UNEP part of the Rotterdam Convention;

(b) Strengthened the regional delivery approach by collaborating closely with the regional centres under the Basel and Stockholm conventions, as well as the UNEP and FAO regional and subregional offices, for instance by strengthening existing partnerships with the regional centres. Information on the activities of the Basel Convention regional centres is available in document UNEP/CHW.12/12 and those of the Stockholm Convention regional centres in document UNEP/POPS/COP.7/11;

(c) Continued to strengthen its cooperation, including through specific partnerships, with relevant intergovernmental organizations such as FAO, UNEP, the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), the World Health Organization (WHO) and the World Customs Organization, and participated actively in partnerships and initiatives such as the Green Customs Initiative, the Polychlorinated Biphenyls Elimination Network, the Global Mercury Partnership, the Global Partnership on Waste Management, the Solving the E-waste Problem Initiative and the Task Group on Measuring E-waste under the inter-agency Partnership on Measuring ICT for Development. Partnerships with academic institutions and universities were further strengthened and new partnerships were identified and launched to raise the profile of conventions-related environmental pollution, hazards, occupational safety and health issues in education programmes. These activities increased knowledge and awareness of the relevance of the conventions to the health and environment of students and future decision makers;

(d) Facilitated technical assistance and capacity-building activities, in cooperation with international organizations, the secretariats of other multilateral environmental agreements, non-governmental organizations, academia and other stakeholders. Further information on international cooperation and coordination undertaken by the Secretariat is set out in document UNEP/CHW.12/19-UNEP/FAO/RC/COP.7/15-UNEP/POPS/COP.7/31;

(e) Continued to build upon and strengthen its webinar programme and to seek new avenues for the delivery of technical assistance, including the use of other available online tools. Through its twice weekly webinar sessions of one hour each during the period from May 2013 to December 2014, the Secretariat delivered 47 webinar sessions on Basel Convention issues, 3 on Rotterdam Convention issues, 37 on issues pertaining to the Stockholm Convention and 52 on cross-cutting issues among two or three of the conventions. In addition, the Secretariat facilitated the delivery of online training sessions for 10 face-to-face workshops organized by partners including WHO, the interim secretariat of the Minamata Convention and the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management secretariat;

(f) Organized a total of 42 subregional and regional capacity-building and training workshops between May 2013 and December 2014, including 6 on Basel Convention issues, 22 on Rotterdam Convention issues, 5 on Stockholm Convention issues and 9 on cross-cutting issues among the conventions. The workshops were organized in collaboration with the Stockholm Convention regional centres, the Basel Convention regional centres, the FAO regional and subregional offices and other partners, such as WHO, as follows:

(i) The Basel-Convention-specific workshops covered the following topics: illegal traffic of hazardous wastes and other wastes under the Basel Convention; facilitation of the entry into force of the Ban Amendment to the Basel Convention; environmentally sound management of wastes consisting of, containing or contaminated with persistent organic pollutants; and reporting obligations under the Basel Convention;

(ii) The Rotterdam-Convention-specific workshops covered the following topics: national action plans; severely hazardous pesticide formulations; industrial chemicals, including asbestos; notification of final regulatory action (such as fostering cooperation between designated national authorities, with a focus on

notification of final regulatory action); and orientation for new members of the Chemical Review Committee;

(iii) The Stockholm-Convention-specific workshops covered the following topics: reviewing and updating national implementation plans; reviewing and updating polychlorinated dibenzo-p-dioxin and dibenzo furan inventories; ecotoxicology; alternatives to newly listed persistent organic pollutants, focusing on endosulfan; and reporting obligations.[10] The Secretariat also cooperated with UNEP and UNIDO on training activities organized by them to enhance parties' understanding of new chemicals listed under the Stockholm Convention;

(iv) Cross-cutting workshops among two or three of the conventions covered the following topics: chairing meetings of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions; national cooperation and coordination for the implementation of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions; and effective participation in the work of the Rotterdam Convention Chemical Review Committee and the Stockholm Convention Persistent Organic Pollutants Review Committee. The Secretariat also cooperated with partners such as the Green Customs Initiative and its partners in the delivery of two training workshops on customs issues;

(g) Actively facilitated assistance to parties, upon request, including brokering assistance between requesting parties and potential providers of the assistance requested through pilot activities proposed and implemented by the Stockholm and Basel convention regional centres. For example, the Secretariat developed methodologies to assess the continued need for pesticides listed under the Stockholm Convention and pilot tested them in two African countries to develop phase-out strategies. A publication intended to assist parties and others in their implementation of the Stockholm Convention by presenting information on industrial persistent organic pollutants in processes in identified sectors and on the availability and assessment of alternatives and substitute was developed in cooperation with, and with the support of, regional centres. Information on difficulties in addressing brominated flame retardants has been gathered in industrialized Asian countries and more is being compiled;

(h) Developed new and updated existing training and capacity-building materials and packaged them using a modular approach. The Secretariat also created a single, user-friendly, simple, easy-to-access entry page and generated a database to compile and organize the materials and provide a searchable interface;

(i) Launched a technical assistance newsletter in May 2014 with the aim of increasing the visibility of the Secretariat's technical assistance programme by providing, on a monthly basis, information on upcoming activities on technical assistance as well as on past activities.

42. Activities specific to the Basel Convention included facilitation of activities of the Partnership for Action on Computing Equipment and the Environmental Network for Optimizing Regulatory Compliance on Illegal Traffic.

43. Activities specific to the Rotterdam Convention included:

(a) The organization of national capacity-building workshops from June 2013 to December 2014, in collaboration with the FAO regional and subregional offices, to foster cooperation; facilitating dialogue among designated national authorities and stakeholders on the challenges faced in chemicals management; and development of strategies for the implementation of the Rotterdam Convention such as training and planning workshops and capacity-building (Chad and Sao Tome and Principe);

(b) The collection of information and organization of country programmes to identify suitable, proven alternatives to substances and agronomic practices that use pesticides subject to the Rotterdam Convention, especially regarding endosulfan in major crops such as coffee and cotton;

(c) The implementation of a project to strengthen the capacity of countries to monitor and report incidents of poisoning caused by severely hazardous pesticide formulations (Colombia, the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Jordan, Morocco, Nicaragua and Oman) and a pilot project on strengthening industrial chemicals management under the Rotterdam Convention (Botswana, Honduras, Jordan and Mauritania). An end product of the latter was the development of an electronic interactive tool to assist developing countries in taking precautions in industrial chemicals

[10] Article 15 of the Stockholm Convention.

management, for example, a globally harmonized system, information collection, risk assessment and management and the setting up of practical systems for countries with few resources;

(d) The organization, in cooperation with other partners, of subregional awareness-raising workshops for local communities and vulnerable groups on social aspects of pesticide use. This increased, in particular, their capacity to identify severely hazardous pesticide formulations.

44. Activities specific to the Stockholm Convention included supporting the participation of 13 participants from developing-country parties and parties with economies in transition in the ninth and tenth summer schools of environmental chemistry which took place from 24 to 29 June 2013 and from 23 to 28 June 2014 in Brno, Czech Republic. Over the last 10 years, the summer school has been organized by the Research Centre for Toxic Compounds in the Environment, a Stockholm Convention regional centre, in collaboration with the Secretariat and other relevant institutions. The programme is designed to provide capacity-building to support the implementation of the global monitoring plan on persistent organic pollutants under Article 16 of the Convention.

45. The technical assistance activities contributed to the achievement of the following results: 1,443 persons were trained through face-to-face training activities on topics related to the three conventions; online training was provided to 1,721 participants; the submission of 48 per cent of national reports under the Basel Convention and 33 per cent under the Stockholm Convention was facilitated; the implementation of 34 projects in 169 countries was facilitated, in cooperation with Basel and Stockholm convention regional centres and FAO regional offices; 17 potential chairs and co-chairs of official working bodies of the conventions were trained; 1,392 partner agencies and stakeholders were approached by means of the technical assistance newsletter; and 771,726 visits to the conventions' web pages were recorded.

46. Further information on the capacity-building and training activities, including training workshops, webinars and projects undertaken by the Secretariat, is set out in the annexes to document UNEP/CHW.12/INF/22-UNEP/FAO/RC/COP.7/INF/14-UNEP/POPS/COP.7/INF/17.

2. Programme of activities for the biennium 2016–2017

47. During the biennium 2016–2017, it is proposed that activities under the technical assistance programme focus on the following thematic areas specific to the Basel, Rotterdam or Stockholm conventions:

(a) Development, review and updating of national plans and strategies:

(i) Under the Basel Convention, this subprogramme would address the implementation of the Strategic Framework under the Convention through the development, review and updating of national hazardous waste management strategies and plans, including national inventories, and the collection of baseline information on the generation, management and disposal of hazardous and other wastes in support of the Strategic Framework and its mid-term data collection;

(ii) Under the Rotterdam Convention, this subprogramme would provide a forum to foster cooperation and facilitate dialogue among designated national authorities at the national and regional levels. This would strengthen their capacities to develop national action plans to implement the Convention, including monitoring, collection and exchange of information, reporting on incidents, preparation of import responses and export notifications and taking decisions on final regulatory action for pesticides and industrial chemicals. The programme should also address social aspects related to risk reduction strategies;

(iii) Under the Stockholm Convention, this subprogramme would address the development, review and updating of national implementation plans. Activities under this subprogramme would cover topics such as national implementation plan inventories, strategies, priorities, development, effectiveness and sustainability and available tools such as the Toolkit;[11]

(b) Chemicals or wastes streams covered under the conventions:

(i) Environmentally sound management of priority hazardous and other waste streams covered under the Basel Convention. This subprogramme would

[11] Toolkit for the Identification and Quantification of Releases of Dioxins, Furans and Other Unintentional POPs.

promote the environmentally sound management of priority waste streams, such as e-waste, persistent organic pollutants and mercury wastes, and the environmentally sound dismantling of ships, and other types of wastes, by disseminating and pilot testing newly developed or updated technical guidelines and training tools for hazardous waste prevention and minimization;

(ii) Chemicals subject to the Rotterdam Convention. This component would be aimed at:

a. Strengthening national capacities related to industrial chemicals obligations under the Convention and continuation of the programme on industrial chemicals, in collaboration with the Inter-Organization Programme for the Sound Management of Chemicals, and follow-up activities to support developing countries in establishing frameworks for strengthening the sound management of industrial chemicals under the Rotterdam Convention;

b. Strengthening the capacity of countries to identify and promote alternatives to pesticides, including the organization of regional symposiums on alternatives, and to submit proposals for severely hazardous pesticide formulations;

(iii) Persistent organic pollutants listed in the Stockholm Convention. This subprogramme would comprise:

a. Pesticides, including alternatives to DDT and endosulfan;

b. Industrial chemicals, including activities in pursuance of the 2025–2028 goals relating to the elimination of polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) and to brominated diphenyl ethers, perfluorooctane sulfonic acid, its salts and perfluorooctane sulfonyl fluoride and hexabromocyclododecane;

c. Unintentionally produced persistent organic pollutants, including best available techniques and best environmental practices and the use of the Toolkit;

d. Chemicals under consideration for listing in 2015 as well as capacity-building activities in support of specific scientific work, in particular the summer school of ecotoxicology, environmental chemistry and persistent organic pollutant monitoring;

(c) Other issues to support the implementation of the Basel Convention, the Rotterdam Convention and the Stockholm Convention, upon requests by parties.

48. Furthermore, activities would also be undertaken in the following thematic areas relevant to the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions:

(a) Strengthening national coordination, institutional capacities, national legal frameworks, information exchange and mainstreaming of chemicals and wastes management into the development processes;

(b) Cross-cutting issues in support of the implementation of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions. This subprogramme would focus on addressing chemicals and wastes from the life-cycle perspective, in particular those regulated by the three conventions. It would also cover scientific and technical issues applicable to two or three conventions. The activities would address the following thematic areas:

(i) Strengthening the capacity of parties to deal with chemicals and wastes regulated by the three conventions;

(ii) National reporting under the Basel and Stockholm conventions;

(iii) Effective participation in the work of and coordination among the scientific subsidiary bodies of the Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions;

(iv) Trade control measures and illegal traffic or trade under the three conventions;

(c) Other cross-cutting issues. This subprogramme would address cross-cutting issues for the three conventions. Activities include the following thematic areas:

(i) Enhancement of skills for chairing meetings of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions;

(ii) Gender and social issues;

(iii) Mobilization of financial resources for the implementation of the conventions;

(iv) The clearing-house mechanism;

(v) Other issues.

49. As requested, a draft programme of activities for the regional and national delivery of technical assistance, which includes a programmatic approach to such delivery, is set out in document UNEP/CHW.12/INF/25-UNEP/FAO/RC/COP.7/INF/17-UNEP/POPS/COP.7/INF/16. The programme takes into account the opportunities for synergies among the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions, continuing to build upon the strengths of, and successful approaches and activities implemented by, the Secretariat of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions over the last biennium. In order to continue increasing the effectiveness of the technical assistance programme and its cost-efficiency, the Secretariat will further build and strengthen links to partners with relevant ongoing programmes.

50. Furthermore, the Secretariat suggests that the evaluation of the implementation and impact of the technical assistance programme should be considered as part of the review of the synergies arrangements to be undertaken by the conferences of the parties at their meetings in 2017 (UNEP/CHW.12/23-UNEP/FAO/RC/COP.7/17-UNEP/POPS/COP.7/33).

51. When relevant and applicable, the technical assistance programme would coordinate its activities with capacity-building activities of the Minamata Convention on Mercury, for example by organizing back-to-back activities.

52. The implementation of the technical assistance programme would be supportive of the Special Programme established in section II of resolution 1/5 on chemicals and waste adopted by the United Nations Environment Assembly, once operational.

53. A list of the activities planned for the year 2015 is set out in document UNEP/CHW.12/INF/23-UNEP/FAO/RC/COP.7/INF/15-UNEP/POPS/COP.7/INF/18.

IV. Proposed action

54. Each Conference of the Parties may wish to adopt a decision along the following lines:

The Conference of the Parties

1. *Takes note* of the information provided by the Secretariat on technical assistance for the implementation of the Convention;[12]

2. *Welcomes* the development of a database for the collection of information pertaining to the needs of parties for the implementation of the Convention, as well as information on available assistance;

3. *Invites* developing-country parties and parties with economies in transition to provide information to the Secretariat on their needs in terms of technical assistance and technology transfer, their difficulties in implementing the Convention and any other views in this regard;

4. *Invites* developed-country parties and others with the capacity to do so to continue to provide information to the Secretariat on the technical assistance and technology that they have available to be transferred to developing-country parties and parties with economies in transition;

5. *Requests* the Secretariat to continue to collect the information pursuant to paragraphs 3 and 4 above through tailored electronic questionnaires, making full use of the database for the collection of the needs of parties in implementing their obligations under the Convention;

[12] UNEP/CHW.12/13-UNEP/FAO/RC/COP.7/13-UNEP/POPS/COP.7/13.

6. *Welcomes* the technical assistance programme,[11] and requests the Secretariat, subject to the availability of resources, to implement it and to take into account the elements contained therein when carrying out its work to facilitate the delivery of technical assistance and capacity-building for the implementation of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions, and urges parties in a position to do so to provide funding to support the implementation of the activities contained in the technical assistance programme;

7. *Emphasizes* the key role played by the regional centres under the Basel Convention on the Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and Their Disposal and the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants as well as the regional and subregional offices of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations in delivering technical assistance upon request at the regional level regarding the implementation of the technical assistance programme and facilitating technology transfer to eligible parties;

8. *Requests* the Secretariat:

(a) To submit a report to the Conference of the Parties at its next meeting on progress made in providing technical assistance and capacity-building to parties, taking into account the information collected pursuant to paragraphs 3 and 4 above;

(b) To prepare a technical assistance programme for the biennium 2018–2019 based on the information collected pursuant to paragraphs 3 and 4 above, taking into account the synergies process as well as the evaluation of the technical assistance programme.

[11] See UNEP/CHW.12/INF/25-UNEP/FAO/RC/COP.7/INF/17-UNEP/POPS/COP.7/INF/16.